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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Regarding the Medical Quality Assurance Commission's "Use of Laser, Light, Radiofrequency and Plasma Devices" (LLRP) rules. WAC 246-919-605 and WAC 246-918-125

What do these rules do?

Medical lasers are prescription devices that penetrate and alter human tissue. The use of laser and radiofrequency devices is considered the practice of medicine. The adopted rules clarify this area of medicine and set standards for the use of such devices by physicians and physician assistants in Washington.

Why are they necessary?

Patient safety drives the need for rules like these. The potential risk to patients from laser and radiofrequency devices include visual impairment, blindness, inflammation, burns, scarring, and other problems.

Who is allowed to use lasers (and these other devices) on people under these rules?

Physicians and physician assistants. In order to use the laser and radiofrequency devices, a professional must be licensed in Washington and their scope of practice must include these devices. Physicians or physician assistants may not delegate the procedures to unlicensed individuals under the rules.

When were the rules adopted?

The rules were adopted as filed on August 25, 2006. They were filed as final rules on January 24, 2007. The effective date — the date when practitioners must follow the rules — is March 1, 2007.

Why has the commission adopted new rules?

There have been numerous complaints and examples people who've been hurt and injured when unlicensed practitioners performed treatments using these medical devices.

Can a physician or physician assistant delegate to licensed professionals without being trained on the use of lasers?

No. Physicians and physician assistants must also be appropriately trained in the physics, safety and techniques of using the laser and radiofrequency devices.

Why does a physician or physician assistant have to do an examination on every patient?

It is considered the standard of care for a physician or physician assistant to examine a patient before developing a treatment plan.

Can my physician be on-call for 24 hours instead of being onsite?

No. The rules state there must be “appropriate supervision.” The rules state that a physician or physician assistant must do the initial history, perform an appropriate physical examination, make an appropriate diagnosis, recommend appropriate treatment and obtain an informed consent.

Were licensed aestheticians specializing in laser hair removal notified of the proposed rule making process?

Standard procedures for public notification involving rule changes were followed. In addition, the Department of Licensing, which licenses aestheticians, was notified of the proposed rules at the start of the process in 2004.

Can aestheticians licensed by the Department of Licensing perform these procedures?

Yes, if other conditions are also met. An aesthetician may perform laser procedures using prescriptive devices, but only under the appropriate supervision of a physician or physician assistant. The [Department of Licensing](#) regulates the scope of practice of aestheticians.

Can a medical assistant currently use aesthetic lasers with a medical doctor’s supervision?

No. A physician can only delegate laser procedures using prescriptive devices to an individual who is licensed to perform those procedures. Medical assistants are not licensed for this.

Can a non-physician practitioner evaluate and treat patients under the guidelines of a written protocol?

No. Under state law, evaluating and treating a patient is considered the practice of medicine.

Are “certified laser technicians” considered licensed professionals?

No. “Laser technicians” are not licensed by the state; therefore, they are not allowed to use these devices to treat people unless they also meet the other requirements.

Can my company’s trained staff perform these procedures?

Only if the employee holds a state license in a profession authorized to perform the procedures.

If you have more questions about the Laser, Light, Radiofrequency and Plasma Device rule:

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